

Halo: The Blood that Binds Us

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Summary: After Cameron is suddenly sucked through a vortex into the Halo universe, he discovers that not only has he been transported into another world, he's been turned into an Elite! With no way to go back home, Cameron must fully embrace his new Sangheili self in order to survive in this new universe and the great war that rages within it. Story image by HWPD. Reviews are appreciated!

1. Chapter 1

****Carlsbad, California November 21****st**** 2012, 6:50 AM****

"_Beep! Beep! Beep!" _The alarm clock blared, quickly waking Cameron from his sleep.

"Five more minutesâ€¦" he mumbled as he covered his head with his pillow and tried to once again return to his dreams. The ringing, however, persisted and the teenager soon gave up and slowly rose from his bed.

He was about 6 feet tall, with light brown hair that at the moment was flayed in every direction from constantly rolling in bed while he was asleep. His dark brown eyes were bloodshot as he looked himself over in the bedroom mirror.

The teenager that looked back at him had an about average build for his age, which was 17, and his skin had a tan complexion that hinted that he had some Italian blood in his family. All in all: everything was the same, though with a bit of a disheveled look.

"_Man, I have got to remember to set my alarm later in the day next time!" _he reminded himself with a yawn.

Cameron walked down the hallway to his little brother's room, opened the door and found that his brother was still asleep in his bed, completely unaffected by the alarm going off just a few feet from his head.

"_Not againâ€¦|_"

He then tip-toed up to his brother's sleeping form, gently put his mouth up to his brother's ear and screamed "Austin! WAKE UP!"

The shout had the desired effect, and the 16-year-old jumped at the words. "Whaaaâ€¦|?" he mumbled, and then with much more force, "Cameron, what the hell was that for!?"

Cameron smirked and said "Hey, it's not my fault you can't wake your dumb ass up by yourself." To which Austin just grumbled and started changing into his day clothes.

Cameron then left and headed downstairs to the kitchen to make a quick breakfast. After he was done eating he quickly headed back upstairs.

His mom, he saw, was still asleep and his dad was probably off running an errand or something. He passed his brother's and his own room and entered the family room.

"I_ wonder what's on today?"_ he thought as he jumped on the couch and turned on the television.

But as he was flipping through the channels, he spotted his Xbox360 out of the corner of his eye. It had been broken for about two months now, but neither he nor his brother had enough money to buy a new one.

Nothing interesting was on at the moment, so he decided to test out the Xbox again. It had already broken down twice before, once to the red ring of death and another to a hardware malfunction. Each time this had happened, however, the console had returned to working order after it had been left to sit for a while.

They had tested it a month ago and it still hadn't worked _"But hey"_ Cameron told himself _"maybe it just needed a bit more time?"_ He plugged the Xbox into the T.V, put in the Halo: Reach disk and turned it on.

Then his life changed forever.

"What theâ€¦|?" Cameron whispered as the Xbox flashed an UNKNOWN ERROR message. "Damn it! The screen doesn't go aura anymore but now something completely different is wrong with it!"

As if to emphasize how wrong something _was_ with it, the Xbox immediately started to shower sparks and flame all over the room.

"_Oh Shit! I better get out of here before the whole room catches on fire!"_ Suddenly a large beam of electricity shot out of the Xbox and enveloped him, but to Cameron's surprise he felt no pain.

"_Wait, why am I not being electrocuted?"_ Cameron's question was soon answered as a vortex erupted from his Xbox and slowly started sucking him in. Too shocked to speak, all he could was repeat _"This isn't real, this isn't real, this isn't realâ€¦|."_ in his head before the last of his body was sucked into the machine.

****January 7****th****, 2552. Unknown Location****

"_Ahhhhh!" _Cameron screamed as he shot up from his bed in a cold sweat. Quickly realizing that he no longer felt the sensation of the strange electricity flowing through him, he assumed it had just been a dream and tried to calm himself down.

"_Whoa, what a weird dreamâ€¦!" _he thought _"Sure, I've had you-wake-up-in-the-morning-but-you-really-haven't dreams before, but they've never ended like THAT! Must have been the shrimp I had last nightâ€¦!"_

He raised his hand to wipe the sweat off of his forehead and found that the movement felt weird to him for some reason. He lifted his hand in front of his face to get a better look and immediately realized something was horribly wrong: Instead of the five fleshy digits he was used to seeing, the hand that stared back at him had 2 long fingers in the middle with thumbs on opposing sides, all covered in tiny dark gray scales.

After a few moments of stunned silence, Cameron started to inspect his altered appendage, curiosity temporarily overcoming the panic that was slowly growing inside of him.

"_What the hell? It looks kind of like the hand of aâ€¦.Oh shit!"_

Apprehension dawned on Cameron as he threw off the covers in panic, hoping that his suspicions were false. The alien body that lay before him, however, said otherwise.

"_I'm an Eliteâ€¦!.."_

Looking over his new body, he immediately saw that he had grown taller, going from his previous 6'1 to a seemingly giant 7'3. Cameron also noticed that his body had significantly bulked up in muscle, getting to about twice its original size. He continued to inspect his body inch by inch until he eventually reached the cloven hooves that had replaced his feet.

"How the hell is this possible?" he breathed, the unreality of his situation beginning to dawn on him.

As he shifted his eyes away from his new body in an effort to calm himself down, Cameron realized that he'd been so preoccupied with his new form that he hadn't noticed that his surroundings had also been altered.

Purple walls, carpet, and furniture surrounded him; the whole room being illuminated from strange light-blue lights in the ceiling that gave it an even more alien appearance. _"I need to find out where the hell I amâ€¦!"_ he thought as he slowly made his way over to the window, having to hobble most of the way due to his inexperience with his new legs.

Cameron pulled away the window covers and was dumbstruck by the landscape that greeted him.

"I don't think we're in Kansas anymoreâ€¦!" he whispered, giving an

involuntary shutter at the still-alien sensation of his new mandibles clicking as they formed the words.

He was most certainly not in Kansas, nor was he for that matter in his home of Southern California; instead the sight before him looked more like something out of a science-fiction movie.

Cameron found himself looking down onto a sprawling Sangheili city. Tall alien-looking buildings studded its orange skyline, the small Covenant spacecraft patrolling casually overhead only adding to its other-worldly aura. After a few seconds of stunned silence, Cameron's analytical mind instantly kicked into overdrive, rapidly inspecting the giant structures before him and cross-referencing them with everything he had seen in the Halo games. The familiar sound of a bell being rung down below, however, soon knocked him from his thoughts and quickly shifted his attention to the surface.

The massive city was alive with movement, he soon saw, with Elites of all kinds bustling through the busy streets. From his vantage point Cameron could see merchants selling goods at the market, soldiers patrolling the back-alleys for thieves, and if he strained his eyes a little bit he could even make out a few couples relaxing on the banks of the lagoon that bordered the city's southern end.

Everywhere Cameron looked he saw Elites; friends laughing, children playing, adults arguing. They all acted so similar to the people from his own world but at the same time he knew that they couldn't be more _different_ from each other._

The culture-shock was too much for Cameron to process, and with his head in his hands, he slowly made his way back to the bed and sat down, his head throbbing in pain as he tried to come to grips with his new reality.

As he stared down at the floor, he noticed that the carpet had a large symbol stitched into it: 2 crossed energy swords with a strange glyph in the center. Looking around, he saw that the alien symbol was also stitched onto the bed sheets and pieced together in stained glass at the top of the bedroom window.

"_The 'Macuree family crest." _he immediately thought.

"_Wait, how the hell would I knowâ€"Argh!"_

The symbol seemed to trigger something deep within Cameron, and his thoughts were immediately interrupted as his head was racked with intense pain, causing him to fall to the floor with his head clenched tight in his hands.

He grasped his head even tighter as the pain continued to increase, getting to a level so excruciating that Cameron sincerely wondered if he was dying.

Death did not come for him, however. Instead, new memories began pouring into his brain like a stream, flashing before his eyes one by one.

_It was a sunny winter day in Koros, the persistent din of water dropping consuming the city as the sun slowly melted away the layer of snow and ice that had blanketed the streets from the previous

night's storm. In the market square merchants quietly muttered curses under their breath as they shivered in the cold, the sight causing a group of northern tourists walking by to snicker to themselves about how soft these southerners were, sitting there shivering in temperatures that in their home states would be considered summer weather. The merchants growled and then looked to each other silently, sharing a conspirator's smile that promised that this group of smart-asses was going to find out that the price of goods had just suddenly doubled for them the next time they came to shop._

The market, usually a tremendously noisy place filled with the shouts of vendors haggling over goods and of fisherman auctioning off their latest catch, was suddenly reduced to series of low whispers as a group of three Sangheili slowly walked toward them from the road leading to the city keep. One of the three wore bright gold military armor while another was wearing a modest purple dress, the large 'Macuree crests on their clothes instantly identifying them as the kaidon and his wife. This however was not what the crowd was interested in, as the pair regularly visited the market and were a common presence in the city, instead their eyes were completely focused on the small child that stood between them, the boy holding his parents' hands as they walked down the street.

Cameron was excited; his parents had finally agreed to take him with them into the city! Everything around him was a completely new experience to him, with the smell of the sea breeze, the wide variety of items being sold in the market and the massiveness of the market square filling his young brain with both curiosity and wonder. The 5-year-old had so many questions for his parents about the city and its people and was about to ask his first when he noticed the inquisitive stares he was receiving.

"_Is that their son?" he heard them whisper in hushed tones._

"_I know he was born about five years ago but nobody outside the family has actually seen him." one murmured._

"_It looks like he got a lot from his father's side of the family" another commented._

"_Daddy, why are they all looking at me?" Cameron nervously asked his father._

"_They've just never seen you before son, don't worry they mean you no harm." he replied with a smile._

Despite his father's assurances the stares made him extremely uncomfortable and he quickly ducked behind his mother to hide himself from their prying eyes. After seeing that all of their gawking had scared the child the members of the crowd quickly remembered their manners and went back to what they had been previously doing, whether that be buying fruit from the vendors or trying to outbid their competitors on that rare Akula fish that had just gotten on the auction block.

Cameron heard his mother whisper to his father above him "Dear, don't you think we should stop by Zhan's shop while we're here? After all we haven't seen him sinceâ€|sinceâ€|"

"_Since his wife was killed, I know." his father sighed "But seeing

him would only make things worse. The merchants still hate me for lowering the tariff rate with Zelso and if they see me together with him they'll completely isolate him from the rest of the guild. By the gods that family has already had enough hardship this year without me adding to it." _

"_Too trueâ€|" his mother whispered, and then quickly changing topics asked "Well should we at least get something for our son while we're at the market? I hear a bunch of new shipments just came in from the northern statesâ€|" _

_Cameron's father agreed and asked him if there was anything he wanted. The boy immediately pointed at an Arum with an aqua blue center sitting in the display case of a nearby toy stall. His father walked up to the owner and asked how much it cost, the merchant responded "28 units". _

"_Usro, I know for a fact that you only pay 10 units for everyone of those you get shipped in from the north! After all I'm the one who signs off on your import registry every year." _

"_Fine thenâ€|.24 units." _

"_You call that a price drop!? 15 units!" _

"_21!" _

"_17!" _

_The haggling continued back and forth until his father and the merchant finally settled on the price of 19.5 units. While the two seemed to be happy on the price, as Cameron walked away with his family, his new toy wrapped in his hands, he heard the merchant mutter "I used to only have to pay 6 units per puzzle before you lowered the tariffâ€|" _

Cameron had little time to analyze this little snapshot of his new childhood before he was once again overwhelmed by the masses of memories flowing into his brain.

_It had been 2 years since that first day in the market, and Cameron now found himself in a 7-year-old Sangheili's body, watching silently as a casket was solemnly laid in front of him and his father. Inside lay his mother, her arms laid together in eternal pose, a Walaki flower clasped between them. Cameron's father wore a stoic face, trying desperately to put up an appearance of strength for the masses of people who attended the funeral, but at this he failed, and it was abundantly clear to those around him that behind his serious face the kaidon was in complete emotional agony. _

_Her death had been so sudden; there had been no warning, no "long illness" to prepare the mind for the possibility of death, not even the fact of age to reduce the surprise factor. His mother had beenâ€|"what? 48? All Cameron knew was that he had walked into his parents bedroom to ask them if him and his friends could practice their sword fighting on the training grounds and found his mother laying on the ground, her head clasped in her hands, and his father screaming at the top of his lungs for a doctor. Sudden Cerebral Hemorrhage was what they had said; there was nothing they could have done. Cameron stilled cried rivers of tears all the same, and as he

looked up to his father, he was shocked to see that he too had tears welled up in his eyes._

After the funeral was over and the kaidon had said his final goodbyes to his wife and Cameron to his mother, the two silently walked back to the keep, his father embracing him in his arms vowing to protect with his life the one thing he had left of her.

Suddenly a knock at the door awoke Cameron from the memories.

"Son? Is everything all right? I heard screaming earlier."the voice behind the door asked.

"I'mâ€¦.fineâ€¦.fatherâ€¦." Cameron managed to stutter out as the memories began to once again flow into him.

"_Wait, father? Yesâ€¦..father. Sveto 'Macuree: age 56, Fieldmaster in the Covenant army, current kaidon of Koros keep and head of the 'Macuree family."_ The information flowed into Cameron's head as if read from a factsheet, followed by several more personal memories of his father.

"_Come on son, I know you can do better than that!" his father laughed as he effortlessly dodged his son's sword lunge and threw him to the ground with ease, quickly jumping on top of Cameron and placing his practice sword on the 12-year-old's neck._

"_And I win yet again. That makes itâ€¦"what? 22-0?" he lightly mocked as he picked up his son from the dirt of the keep practice grounds. "Seriously son I don't know why you keeping trying to knock me off balance with that back-handed flourish, it didn't work the first time and it won't now, you're completely outmatched." _

Cameron just rolled his eyes as he got back up into fighting position, completely ignoring his father's speech as he instead tried to formulate his strategy for the next bout. His father's last sentence had given him an idea however, and he broke into a wide grin as he and his father once again squared off.

"_What's with the smile son? Excited for your next beating?"_

Cameron ignored his father's attempts to rile him up, as he remembered what he had told him when he had first started learning to sword fight "When you get angry son you lose your focus, when you lose your focus you make mistakes, and when you make mistakes you die."

Instead Cameron crouched back as if he were about to lunge again and told his father "No father, it's just about you had just said. You told me I was outmatched, and as you had always taught me: If you find yourself outmatched, cheat."

_Then before his father could react, Cameron kicked dust into his eyes. Taking advantage of his father's sudden disorientation, he tackled him to the ground with all of his strength, pinning his arms down as his father started to swing his sword wildly. His father soon broke Cameron's hold on his left hand and began to thrust his sword up towards his son's neck, but was interrupted when he felt the soft hum of Cameron's energy sword resting on his throat, while his was

still in the air mid-swing. The kaidon growled in disbelief when he realized what had just happened: the match was now over, and his son had beaten him._

"_Enjoy your victory while you can son!" he exclaimed, pushing his son off of him "Because it's still 22-1 and you've still got a long way until you can beat your old man on anything more than dumb luck!"_

"_You sure are chatty for a dead manâ€|" Cameron smiled back as he held his sword in the air like he'd just slain a great beast._

"_Why youâ€|" his father started, on the outside appearing completely furious but on the inside feeling nothing but pride in his son for being able to best him._

However he couldn't let his son know that so he said "Okay then mister high-and- mighty, I was going to stop practice after this but since you feel so sure about yourself we're going to practice for the rest of the dayâ€|"no breaks! How do like that mister Swordmaster?"

Cameron groaned as he once again got into his fighting posture, wondering why he just had to open his big mouth.

Two years laterâ€|..

Cameron was having trouble keeping up with his father as the two were escorted into Tano Hall by two 'Macuree honor guards, their massive size and the deadly sheen of their plasma spears leading Cameron to wonder who in their right mind would dare try to attack them and think they could survive. As they entered the chambers of the Grand Korosian Council, the teenage Sangheili was amazed by the sheer size of the room and the massive amounts of people crammed inside of it. At the center of the room was very long gray alloy panel with five large seats placed along its length, two on either side of the largest seat in the middle that was slightly higher than the others. Cameron's father walked to take his place on the center seat, as it was meant for the kaidon of Koros, motioning for Cameron to follow him. After his father had taken his seat he whispered in Cameron's ear "Son, I know this meeting will seem to you as one of the most boring things you've ever had to sit through but I just want to remind you that I brought you here for a reason, as you will one day have to lead this council when you become kaidon and the decisions you and the council make will affect the lives of everyone in Koros. So please try to pay attention to what I say and do, as it may become invaluable to you laterâ€|"

"_Ah, is this your son Sveto? I must say that he is in your spitting imageâ€|" the Sangheili occupying the seat to his father's left interrupted. He was about a year older than his father and had a large ragged scar running down his cheek that Cameron couldn't help but stare at._

"_Yes he is Dyad, I finally decided to show him how things work in the council." he replied_

"_Or don't workâ€|But where are my manners? Dyad 'Docolee at your service, I'm the representative for the province of Oscan." the elite smiled, giving a short little bow. Cameron was about to introduce

himself when bells rang out throughout the building, signaling the beginning of the meeting._

"_Looks like it's time to start" his father said "We'll talk more once the meeting is over. Don't forget what I told you!"_

Cameron nodded and made his way to the VIP observer box, steeling himself for a boring meeting. "Boring" it turned out didn't even begin to cover how dull it was and Cameron fell asleep after the first half-hour.

_He woke up a few hours later to see his father and Dyad staring down at him, his father had a look of disapproval on his face while Dyad appeared to be trying to keep himself from laughing. "Didn't you listen to a word I told you?" his father began, anger rising in his voice. _

"_Oh don't be so hard on the kid Sveto," Dyad interrupted "If I recall correctly, when our fathers took us to our very first council meeting we were both out in 15 minutes, and your son managed to stay awake for twice that! Maybe there is hope for the next generation after all?" he chuckled._

As Cameron and his father walked out of the council chambers, his father began lecturing him about paying attention "While it's true that Dyad and I also had trouble sitting through meetings when we were your age, it still doesn't mean that you should. Especially when we discussing such important things such as the insurgency in?"

Cameron's father never finished his sentence, as at that moment a Sangheili dressed in black lunged at his father from the crowd with an energy sword. One of his father's honor guards immediately put his own body between his father and the assailant, taking the energy sword straight to the chest and falling to the ground, dead. The assassin then turned his attention to Cameron's now-exposed father, leaping at him with his sword screaming "Long live Asinm!" Then in a move so fast Cameron could barely see it, his father activated his own sword and skewered the assassin in the chest mid-swing. The assailant managed to whisper "Fast?" before his eyes glazed over and he went limp on the blade.

With a roar of triumph Cameron's father flung the assassin's dead body off his sword and into the wall, the corpse's purple blood staining the white metal the hall was constructed of. "Is that the best you can do 'Inkulee's? You're too cowardly to fight me face-to-face so you send an assassin to do your dirty work for you? You are the most gutless, honor -less family I have ever had the displeasure of fighting!" he screamed to the ceiling, adrenaline pumping through his veins from the failed attempt on his life. The remaining honor guards immediately sprung into action, bundling Cameron and his father out of the building and back up to the keep as fast as they could before another assassination attempt was made.

As Cameron watched Tano Hall shrink in the distance through the back window of the revenant, he nervously asked his father "What was that all about?"

_His father, having noticeably calmed down in the past few minutes,

smiled and replied "Politics my son, politics."_

Cameron's head was racked with dizziness as the memories of his father ceased, at least for the moment.

"You don't sound fine." his father responded from behind the door.

Despite his best efforts, Cameron couldn't help letting out a loud groan as another wave of memories invaded his mind, his brain now being painfully infused with Sangheili culture, writing, and history.

Hearing his son's sighs of pain, the kaidon warned, "That's it son, I'm coming in!"

Before Cameron could protest, the bedroom door flew open and his father rushed in. Finding his son lying on the floor clutching his head in pain, he immediately called out to his two bodyguards who stood outside the doorway and ordered "Komu! C'tas! Find the keep doctor immediately and tell him to get down here as fast as he can! Tell him it's happening again!"

"But sir, our duty is to stay with you at allâ€"."

"Forget the protocol! If the damn 'Inkulee's want to try and kill me while you're away then they're damned welcome to come and try but I will not just sit here and watch my son die like his mother did! Get your damned asses in gear! NOW!"

The guards could hardly move their feet fast enough as they shot down the hallway in search of the doctor, yelling at the regular soldiers they passed to join in the search.

Kneeling down and holding his writhing son in his arms, Sveto pleaded to him "Stay with me, Onca, whatever you do don't let go!"

"_Oncaâ€|. Yes, that's what my Sangheili name is, Onca 'Macuree." _Cameron/Onca thought as the memories of the last 2 years of his Sangheili life slowly fell into place, finally ending with the image of him returning home from the Sangheili War Academy on summer holiday the day before and quickly falling asleep in his bed, exhausted from the long trip.

As the memories stopped and the pain subsided, fear rapidly began to take its place in Cameron's thoughts. _"What's going to happen now?"_ he wondered with panic, "Am I now going to start to forget my human memories? My friends? My family? Lose them all and live the rest of my life with completely no recollection of who I once was?"

Luckily, it seemed whatever it was that done this to him had decided to let him keep his former memories, as he would always be able to remember everything from his old life.

Cameron had no time to celebrate this fact, however, as he could slowly feel himself drifting to sleep, his mind needing rest to recover from the massive amount of stress it had endured.

As he slowly lost consciousness, Cameron could still faintly hear his

father gently praying above him, "Please, by the gods, you've already taken Kala away from me, don't take Onca away from me as well!"

"_Onca, huh?"_ Cameron thought right before everything finally faded to black, "_Hmmmâ€¦I think I like the sound of thatâ€¦"_

2. Chapter 2

****Whew! 12 pages and three and a half months later I've finally managed to finish chapter 2! Thanks to LordNim, Ny'Kle, H3PD, MaximusMinimus and Raex for reviewing the last chapter and an additional thanks to H3PD for once again proofreading this story.****

****Hope you guys enjoy!****

From the seemingly eternal blackness of sleep Cameron slowly felt himself stir. However, instead of going into full consciousness and waking up as one would expect, the teenager found himself somewhere in between, neither fully immersed in mental slumber nor completely broken from the realities of the dreamscape.

As Cameron's memories, emotions, and knowledge slowly returned to him he found himself puzzled by the strange feelings he was receiving from his body. For some reason he felt weightless, as if he wasn't lying on the ground that he sensed beneath him he would float away like a leaf in the wind.

Finding he had enough strength to open his eyes Cameron slowly picked himself up from the ground and started to scan his surroundings for anything that would cause the bizarre feeling he was experiencing.

He didn't have to look far.

* * *

><p>Helplessness was all Sveto Macuree felt as he kneeled before his son's idle form, praying desperately to the Forerunners for Onca's survival. As he did this the Kaidon took a brief break from his prayers to consider the irony of the action, as though the he held the rank of Fieldmaster in the Covenant Army, he secretly didn't believe in the often-preached divinity of the great race that had come before, not for a long time.<p>

But that didn't matter now, not when his son's life was hanging in the balance. Sveto knew that he would strike any deal, make any sacrifice if it meant his son would live to see another sunrise, and if that meant going back on his previous religious unfaithfulness, then that was the price he would pay.

Though this wasn't the first time he had experienced it the Kaidon struggled to overcome the overriding feeling of helplessness that gripped him as he watched his son softly groan and turn in his sleep. "_I'm a general in the Covenant Army; I have charged massive hordes of enemy warriors without batting an eyelid, I have been tortured for days without shedding a tear, I do not fear death."_ He told himself as he watched Onca's moaning body, letting out a fearful sigh

continuing, _"But this is not death. No this is far viler to the heart."_ Fearing for one's own survival was one thing; at least then one had some measure of control over his fate, utilizing the skills they had acquired to get them out of the fray alive. This was not the case now; Sveto's strength, his speed, his mastery of the blade lay useless to him here as he was forced to watch his child squirm and shift under the stitched sheets, locked in a state of rest he may never wake fromâ€|

"Bah!" he scowled angrily as he abruptly ceased his prayers, "It's no use. Praying to the so-called gods will not help Onca's condition; where were those_ gods_ when I needed them most?" Sveto spat, his voice filling with almost unbridled venom, "Where were they when Kala was taken from me? Where were _they_ when I was forced to watch her die on the damned carpet of our bedroom?" The breath suddenly left his lungs at the memory and he clutched his heart as if it was an old battle wound, only this wound had never healed, and the Kaidon knew it never would.

10 years earlierâ€|

"Dear?"

Sveto looked up from the usual daily military paperwork at his desk to the sound of his wife's voice, smiling at the flash of mild amusement that sparkled briefly through her beautiful emerald irises at the glass vision enhancer that rested over his right eye.

"What is it my love?" he answered, only getting a soft giggle from the female at the bedroom door in response. "Oh come on I don't look too ridiculous with this on do I?"

"No, no it's not that." his wife replied, covering her mouth to stifle a laugh as she walked towards him. If anyone other than her had laughed at him like that he would have at least been highly annoyed, at worst outraged, but now the action only seemed to fill his heart with happiness. "It just makes you appearâ€|dignified."

"Dignified? What do you mean by that?" he inquired.

"I don't know, I guess sort of like â€| distinguished elder if you will." she responded with a mischievous smile.

Sveto's pride took a bit of a hit at the "elder" comment, as his eyes and strength were slowly beginning to fray around the edges (hence the vision enhancer) and he found himself growing more and more concerned with his age. " Please don't tell me I've grown that old, for the Forerunners' sake I'm not even into my 50's I don't know if I can handle being called 'elder' just yet " he responded with a groan.

Kala couldn't help but giggle at her husband's reaction to her "elder" jibe, knowing that it had become a bit of a sore point with him. She understood his fears, herself being in fact two years older than her husband's age of 46. Still, she couldn't help but laugh at seeing her big, strong husband so obviously flustered. Deciding to put the hook a little bit deeper she continued "But don't worry dear, as you continue to grow old and decrepit, I'll always be there to hold your cane for you."

_Sveto chuckled at his wife's prodding as he softly cupped her chin with his hand and brought it closer to him until their mouths were almost touching. "And even when that day comes I know you will be just as beautiful as you are now." he murmured before he slowly closed his eyes and locked his mandibles with hers. _

_Kala eagerly responded to her husband's kiss, closing her eyes and draping her arms around his strong back, only letting out a yelp of surprise as Sveto wrapped his arm around her waist and pulled her down to his lap __** (Author's Note: No, they are not doing "that" , they're just getting a bit lovey-dovey right now** __). The two continued their romantic embrace for a few minutes before reluctantly parting their mandibles, though their arms still remained firmly around each other. The two continued to cuddle as they looked through the stain-glass window to their right into the courtyard, watching their 5-year-old son play games with the other children of the keep._

"Onca's getting older tooâ€|" Sveto whispered into his wife's ear as she gently rested her head against his.

Kala didn't respond to her husband's statement, instead seeing the opportunity she had been waiting for and with a wide smile on her face she grabbed his right hand and slowly brought it over until it was resting on her stomach. "And in a couple of months he'll have a little sibling to play with." she said with barely contained glee.

For a split second Sveto was confused with what his wife meant but his eyes went wide as realization dawned on him. "You meanâ€|?"

"Yep" Kala responded with joy, "I'm pregnant."

Sveto immediately gripped her in a passionate embrace (making sure to take care around her stomach area) and bestowed another long and loving kiss onto her mandibles.

"How long have you known?" Was his first question.

"Since this morning" was the reply, "That's what I had originally come in here to tell you." She then looked down onto her stomach and once again brought her husband's hand onto it. "The keep doctor said it's going to be a girl."

While some Sangheili would be dismayed to learn that their wives were going to give birth to girls instead of strong sons to continue their lines (in fact there were rumors that in some of the more extremely conservative states the husbands routinely killed their wives after learning this) Sveto was just as overjoyed with the news that he was soon going to have a daughter as he was 6 years ago when his wife had told him she was pregnant with their son. "Have you thought of any names yet dear?" He asked her with excitement in his voice.

Kala nodded and said, "I think I'm going to name her Ryakiâ€|"

_"A beautiful name my love." Sveto smiled as he pulled his wife close to him and the two of them silently thought of the future they and

their son were going to have with their new daughter._

After a few minutes of quiet embrace Sveto felt his wife suddenly give off a powerful shudder. He raised his head to look and see what was wrong with his wife and to his everlasting horror saw that his wife's eyes were wide in shock and her mandibles twitched as they tried to form words but only getting out an untranslatable garble. Before he could even try to aid her however she let out a wailing scream, one that would haunt him for the rest of his life, and fiercely gripped her head with her hands, quickly slipping out of their hug and falling to the floor.

_Sveto was immediately by her side, grasping her hand in his and screaming at the top of his lungs for the keep doctor, so concerned over the welfare of his wife that he failed to even notice his son standing in the doorway of their bedroom. "Stay with me Kala" He fearfully whispered to her between screams for help, to his horror seeing what appeared to be blood beginning to flow out of his wife's ears. "You have to stay awake!" After a few more seconds of indefinable stuttering Kala managed to build up what little of her strength remained to whisper "Please! Take Care Of Our Son", quietly motioning with her head to the shocked child standing only about 20 feet away from them. Seeing the tears in her husband's eyes she stuttered, "I'm! So! Sorry! Sveto!" _

"Don't you say that Kala, don't you damn say that; you're going to be fine, you hear me?" He growled back, his heart burning with pain as he sensed the air of finality that lay behind her words. As her breathing became more and more labored she managed with the last of her energy to pull her husband's mandibles to hers in one last kiss. Then, in a voice so soft Sveto could barely hear it she whispered, "I! Love! You!". After these last parting words Sveto was forced to watch as the woman he loved's body went limp and her breathing ceased. Clutching his wife's body in his arms Sveto let out a yell of loss and agony that barely began to describe the pain that coursed within him.

Sveto reeled as he returned to the present, still clutching his heart tight. He wanted so hard to forget that day, the day that had killed his gods, his daughter, and the woman he had loved more than anyone else in his life. He tried to forget it, but he knew he never would. "_Please_" he pleaded, not quite sure who he was talking to, "Please _don't do this to me again. Onca's all that I have left, if I lose him!"_ he trailed off as he looked at his son's prone form, "_I don't think my heart will be able to take it!"_

* * *

><p>For the second time in a few hours Cameron was shocked by the landscape that lay before him, and while he had thought the Sangheili city an extremely bizarre sight, it paled in comparison to what he now saw.<p>

Cameron found himself in the middle of a plain that was best described as a mixture between the surface of the moon and the one Salvador Dali painting with the melting clocks. Misshapen multi-colored mountains formed a wall on either horizon, with the space between littered with rocks and objects moving and acting in ways that seemed to break the very laws of physics. A combination of awe and fear slowly rose within Cameron as he watched a mangled tree

quickly grow legs and casually walk towards the grotesque peaks, and he nervously whispered to himself, "Where the hell am I?"

"Isn't it obvious Cameron? We're inside your mind."

Cameron quickly turned towards the deep and somewhat husky voice that had answered him and whatever reply he may have made instantly died in his throat, for before him lay an exact copy of his Sangheili body, its mandibles arched in what he assumed to be a smug grin.

The sight of the Elite brought back the memories of _why_ he was asleep in the first place, and as if sensing Cameron's train of thought the alien replied with a wave of his hand "And before you ask, yes, all of that did actually happen."

The statement seemed to bring back the feeling of unrealness he had previously experienced when he had first woken up and viewed his new body for the first time, and Cameron slowly stuttered "So the Xbox, the city, the memoriesâ€¦?"

"All true" the Elite replied, looking a bit annoyed at having to repeat what he had already told the teenager.

Cameron's grip on his emotions, already heavily strained from his current predicament, quickly snapped at seeing the Sangheili's seemingly uncaring manner, and with as much anger as he could muster he screamed back at him "All true!? I get sucked away from my_ home_, my_ friends_, my_ family_, and get sent to the freaking halo universe, as a friggin' Elite no less, with no possible way to go back home and that's the best you can say? 'All true'!? Who the hell do you think you are!?"

The Elite, completely unfazed by Cameron's rage, calmly replied "Simple, Cameron. I am you."

Shock momentarily coursed through Cameron's body, only to be quickly overtaken by his previous anger.

"You're lyingâ€¦" Cameron growled, his rage slowly building in intensity as he glared at the Sangheili with eyes filled with hate. "You can't be me so stop bullshitting me you f***ing liar!" He screamed as he threw a punch at the clone before him, his anger burning at a blistering intensity.

With the same annoyed expression he had displayed earlier the Elite blocked Cameron's punch with ease, its strong alien fingers locking around his fist and holding it firmly in place about a foot from his head.

"Youâ€¦" Cameron started to snarl until he noticed how small his fist seemed in comparison to the Sangheili hand that surrounded it. "_How is that possible? You'd think that since we're both Elites our hands would be about the same size_" he thought.

As he looked towards his arm the shock he immediately felt mirrored that which he had experienced a few hours ago, only this time it wasn't that he was surprised that his arm was that of an Elite, but rather that it _wasn't_.

Instead of the four scaled fingers he had woken up to before he saw

the five fleshy digits that until a short time ago he had possessed all of his life.

With a sigh the Elite released Cameron's hand and with his previous rage now completely forgotten the teenager quickly looked himself over and found that his entire body had reverted back to its previous form. Cameron looked up at the Elite with a puzzled expression, confusion overshadowing any newfound joy he may have felt.

Continuing to stare into the silent Elite's lightly amused eyes Cameron managed to stutter out a barely audible "Howâ€|?"

Breaking his silence, the Sangheili sighed "I guess now it's finally time to get down to business then."

"What are you talking about and more importantly who the hell are you?" The startled human yelled back at him. "_I guess the more correct phase would be __**what**__ the hell are youâ€|"_" he silently thought to himself.

"You sure do like to repeat yourself." the Elite chuckled, "Which is ironic because I know we hate it when other people do that."

Growing confused and a little annoyed, Cameron responded back "And another thing, why the hell are you talking like we're the same person? It's kind of weird and just a bit creepy if you mind me saying."

The Elite seemed to take the quasi-insult in stride, "Like I said before Cameron, I am you. Well, the Sangheili part of you at least, in retrospect I guess I should have clarified that earlier." It responded with a bit of embarrassment.

"Huh?" Cameron balked, quickly berating himself for how stupid the word sounded as soon as it left his mouth.

Pointing a scaled finger at the human, the Elite replied "Let's start from the beginning; when you first got transported to Sangheilios I started to get uploaded into your mind."

"What!?" Cameron replied in barely concealed horror, taking a few steps back from the Elite.

The Sangheili raised his hand to stop Cameron's inevitable next question as he continued, "The transfer was supposed to leave you with more or less the same personality and memories but with all the mental tools and information you would need to survive and blend in with Sangheili society, in addition to educating you on the details of your new life and family."

"The flashbacksâ€|" Cameron breathed.

"Correct! It's good to see you aren't totally incompetent todayâ€|" The Elite smiled.

However the way the Elite trailed off at the end of his remark made Cameron suspicious, and sensing that there was something else the Sangheili wasn't letting on about Cameron pressed "Butâ€|?"

Dropping the grin he had been wearing the Elite once again sighed and answered "But you passed out from the stress before I was done imprinting myself on your psyche."

"So that's why I'm here right now?" Cameron asked, beginning to grasp at what the Sangheili was now getting at.

"Yes" the Elite responded, making a sweeping gesture at the misshapen landscape that surrounded the two of them. "We're currently in the level of your sub-conscious that deals with creativity, which is why everything looks so weird, as in this realm nothing is bound to the laws of reality and literally anything is possible."

"But howâ€|?" Cameron started, gesturing to the figment's Sangheili body.

"Since I am technically you I was able to create a physical body for myself so I could converse to you." The Elite clarified and then sensing the teenager's next question continued "While the practice of anchoring you to this level of your mind was at worst a trivial problem."

While Cameron wasn't exactly satisfied with its reply the teenager decided to let it go for a while in favor getting an answer to another thing that had been weighing heavily on his mind. "Be that as it may, you still haven't told me why I'm like this." he asked, circling his now smaller, shorter, and weaker human body with his hands.

The corners of the Elite's mandibles arched into a small grin in response to the question and it answered "Let me answer your question with one of my own: When you picture yourself in your head, what's the first thing that comes to mind?"

"Human" Cameron immediately responded.

"And there you have it Cameron. While your physical body in the 'real world' may be that of a Sangheili your mind still identifies itself as human, so now when your brain re-creates 'itself' in your sub-conscious it does so in the form that it sees itself as, which obviously in your case is your former human body." the Sangheili replied as if giving a lecture, slightly annoying Cameron.

After a quick mental run-through revealed that everything the Elite had said at least made somewhat sense Cameron realized that there was still one important thing still missing, as while he now understood the how of the Sangheili's actions he was still in the dark as to the why.

"So wait let me get this straight, you went through all this trouble, did all of this physiological crap, just to tell me that you hadn't finished giving me my new memories?_ I'm sorry but I know there has to be more to it than that."

Letting out yet another sigh the Elite shook his head and replied, "No Cameron, I brought you here so I could get you to allow me to finish what I started. We need to merge Cameron, we must become whole if we are to survive."

* * *

><p> Knock, Knock, Knock

Sveto was awoken from the drowsy haze he had fallen into by the rapping at the door and after taking a quick re-survey of the room he found that he had spaced out for at least an hour or two, as the sun had already set behind the western horizon and night had fallen over the keep.

"_Gods damn it this tea the doctor gave me isn't keeping me awake as long as it used to."_ the kaidon growled in his head before taking another sip from the fine china cup that had been resting on his son's nightstand. While the tea failed to completely eliminate the weariness that continued to permeate his mind it still managed to clear his senses up enough for him to register the second, louder series of knocks that echoed through his son's bedroom. Sveto chose to ignore them however, instead shifting his focus once again to his only child's motionless form, still hoping that at any moment his son might come to but knowing in his heart that it was extremely unlikely.

Knock, Knock, Knock

"Go away!" the kaidon yelled, still refusing to take his eyes off of his son.

Knock, Knock, Knock

"I thought I told you all that I was not to be disturbed unless it was a national crisis and since I don't see any smoke rising from the city or Zelsonian hordes descending from the mountains I don't think whatever message you've been sent to deliver to me qualifies so I recommend that you leave before I have your head put on a pike in the market square!" Sveto roared, his previous irritation rapidly shifting into blistering anger.

"Fine then Sveto, if you want to play it that way then that's fine with me" a familiar and slightly annoyed voice responded from the other side of the door.

The kaidon had barely seconds to react before the hinges of the door shattered, causing the frame to fall to floor with a loud thud and sending up a light cloud of dust and wood splinters into the air. Sveto immediately sprang into fighting stance and activated his dual energy swords, quickly positioning his body so that it lay in between the mystery Sangheili and his heavily vulnerable son.

However when the dust cleared Sveto was met not with the scowling face of an enemy assassin but the smiling and amused eyes of his friend Dyad 'Docolee.

"By the gods Dyad have you gone mad!?" he screamed, quickly deactivating his swords and walking over to inspect the ruined hulk of the door frame.

"No" his friend replied as he calmly found himself a chair, "Just tired of sitting here in the keep while you lock yourself in your son's room like everyone else has the plague."

"Gods Dyad I thought for a second that you were an 'Inkulee

assassin." Sveto breathed before returning to his seat beside his son's bed.

Raising an eyebrow at his friends lumbering gait and the weariness that had bled into his voice Dyad responded, "Thank the gods that I wasn't Sveto because with the reflexes you seem to have now you would have been dead before you could even bring your swords to bear."

Before Sveto could offer a rebuttal Dyad quickly raised his hand to silence him and calmly asked "How many days has it been since you've slept, Sveto? Three? Maybe four?"

"Five" his friend gloomily answered, taking another sip from his tea.

"By the gods man!" Dyad exclaimed, clearly shocked by his friend's admission, "How in the hell have you not passed out from exhaustion already?"

Sveto merely shrugged and continued to gaze at his son's tranquil face, internally flinching a bit every time he saw Onca's face break into a grimace as he slept. His eyes softened and he whispered, more to himself than to his friend, "Five days; it's been five days since he collapsed and he still hasn't woken up yet."

"He will" Dyad responded, putting his hand on Sveto's shoulder as he tried to comfort his close friend, "He is strong Sveto, I doubt he would ever let himself fall to such a disease, if that is what is ailing him."

"Kala was strong too and that didn't turn out to do her much good" his close friend muttered back. Still Sveto couldn't ignore the fact that his wife had died in barely over a minute while his son had already almost lasted a week, though it was obvious that he was not suffering from the cerebral bleeding that had so quickly taken his beloved Kala away from him.

"You just have to believe in your son Sveto, killing yourself with worry isn't going to help his condition."

"Onca's life is more important to me right now than my own Dyad; I thought you would have known this by now."

Stunned silence followed and Sveto incorrectly assumed that the argument had been officially settled, his friend's reply however quickly made it clear that this was anything but the case.

"Oh? And is it also more important that leading the more than the 30 million Sangheili that fall under your family's rule? More important than making sure that the hungry are properly fed, the shipments from the north are being paid for on time and that the Prophet's lapdogs are prevented from making another coup attempt to unseat us? Are you truly being so conceited that your son's life is more valuable to you than the welfare of the millions of people who call you kaidon?"

Sveto was completely taken by surprise at the venom that bled into Dyad's voice when he spoke and at how quickly his friend had shifted from his calm and humorous self to a man seemingly filled with pure

disgust. "You know it's not likeâ€"

"According to what you said it's exactly like that! Gods damn it Sveto you weren't given that shiny gold armor you wear just for kicks! You were given it because you are the Kaidon of Koros and as such you are supposed to put the needs of the people before your own and that includes, as callous as it sounds, tending to the management of the keep instead of standing by and supporting your son."

Sveto didn't even bother making a rebuttal as he knew that every word Dyad had spoken, no matter how infuriating, had been completely and utterly true. After a few seconds of awkward silence he managed to say "It sounds like this has been on your mind for quite a while Dyad."

His anger cooling down a bit the councilman admitted with a sigh "It has been for the last several days. Look Sveto I've watched Onca grow up from the time he was an infant and I'm also extremely heartbroken at what's happened but enough is enough; I'm giving you one more day with Onca and if you're not back at your duties by then I'll drag you out of here by the fibers of your cape if necessary."

With that Dyad turned to leave but as he began to walk through the doorway Sveto called out to him "The council sent you didn't they Dyad?"

The councilman then looked over his shoulder at his friend and answered "I didn't do this for the council Sveto, I did this because I'm your friend."

As Sveto heard his friend's footsteps grow further and further away he felt the drowsiness that had previously plagued him slowly returning. Thinking back to Dyad's comments on his lack of sleep he thought to himself "_Maybe I should rest my eyes a little bit, just for a minute or twoâ€|"_After a few seconds the kaidon slowly closed his eyes â€|and then promptly began to snore.

* * *

><p>"Whaa?" Cameron exclaimed, taken aback by the Elite's statement.<p>

"I know you heard me Cameron, we need to merge our personalities. There are still some blank pages that need to be filled in for you: customs to be learned, memories to gain. While I managed to transfer about three-quarters of my information into you before you passed out I still need to give you the rest of it or we won't stand a chance out _there._" It continued, pointing up to the imaginary stars and then crossing its arms as it waited for him to decide.

After a few minutes of intense internal debate Cameron finally sighed and said "Well it's not like I have much choice do I? I really don't want to be an Elite but I'd much rather be a live one than a dead one."

"Excellent." the Sangheili smiled and slowly walked towards Cameron, only to be stopped by the teenager's outstretched hand. "Before I say yes I have just one question left: After this is over will I still be, you know, _me_?"

Finding the question quite reasonable considering the circumstances the Sangheili happily answered "Yes, you'll still completely have the same personality, granted with a bit of a Sangheili tint to it."

"What do you mean by 'tint'?" Cameron nervously replied.

The Elite waved his hand dismissively in response, "Nothing major, some of your old human sayings will be replaced with Sangheili ones, such as instead of 'oh my god' you'll find yourself saying 'by the gods' and you'll become a bit more prideful but other than that you should be exactly the same. Now please grab my hand and we'll begin."

Cameron silently complied, his nervousness building on what might happen next. However his feelings disappeared as soon as his fingers made contact with the Elite's hand. The Sangheili immediately started to glow orange and to Cameron's horror its body slowly began to flake off in chips of bright orange energy **(think of when a Promethean Knight is killed in Halo 4)** which were then sucked into Cameron's body, filling him with a strange warm feeling. As more and more of the energy was transferred into his body Cameron saw to his mild dismay that with every piece he absorbed more of his body reverted back to its previous Sangheili form.

After a few minutes Cameron slowly looked down to the rapidly disappearing Elite and saw that all of his Sangheili side had been absorbed save for its upper body and head.

"What will happen to you?" Cameron asked the disintegrating Elite, now only visible from the neck up, with genuine concern.

"It doesn't matter about me anymore Cameron, all that matters now is what will happen to _us_."

"But still what if something goes wrong? What if I'm in a situation that falls way outside everything you've given me? I'm only a 17-year-old kid goddamnit!"

"Don't worry Cameron, I'm not really leaving, I'll always be a part of you." It said with a smile as the last of its form was finally sucked into Cameron's once-again fully Sangheili body, at the last moment adding with a chuckle "As the Demon once said, wake me when you need meâ€¦".

Cameron just silently stared at his now re-scaled hands as he felt the warm energy within him slowly dissipate before it eventually stopped.

"_It's time to wake up Onca._" he heard a soft voice whisper in his ear before he was suddenly propelled from the interior of his mind and into the waking world.

(From here on Cameron will be referred to as Onca)

Onca's eyes shot open to find himself back in the same bed he had woken up in, with the only difference being the armored form of his father sleeping by his bedside, seemingly from exhaustion. Being careful not to wake his father, Onca slowly got out of bed and made his way to the window, his previous difficulties with his legs

seemingly forgotten. As he watched the sun rise over the mountains to the east, Onca swore he could hear a familiar-sounding voice whisper to him from inside his head, "The dawn has come Onca, now come on, we have a whole new life to live."

****And there you have it! Please leave a review and tell me what you think of the story so far, I really appreciate it and would love to hear any ****constructive**** criticism that will hopefully make the next chapter even better!****

****See you guys next chapter!****

****-caman213****

End
file.